



Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities

Celebrating 35 Years of Leadership & Advocacy

www.laccod.org



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January 18, 2012

TO: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
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FROM: John B. Troost
President, County Commission on Disabilities

SUBJECT: ACCESS SERVICES, INC.

The Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities (LACCOD) was established by the Board of Supervisors in 1975 to advise the Board on disability issues. One of the duties of the Commission is with the assistance of County departments and others, is to advise your Board on the unique needs of people with disabilities, including, but not limited to, the areas of health, employment, education, public attitudes, barriers and recreation.

An additional area LACCOD would like to advise your Board on is transportation. LACCOD is particularly concerned about the quality of service and safety of service that Access Services, Inc. (ASI), provides to their customers. ASI was established in 1994, and is designated as the Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) for Los Angeles County. Statewide CTSA's were created in 1979, when the state legislature passed Assembly Bill 120, "Social Services Transportation Improvement Act". This landmark legislation included a provision calling for the designation of a Consolidated Transportation Service Agency (CTSA) in each California county. In addition to being designated as the CTSA for Los Angeles County, ASI is also responsible for the administration of the Los Angeles County Coordinated Paratransit Plan, on behalf of the County's 45 public fixed route operator and provides more than 2.3 million rides each year. Some of our concerns are as follows:

TAP Card Program

ASI is a partner in TAP, Los Angeles County's fare collection system, and has partnered with ReadyCARD to add the functionality of a prepaid VISA Card to the riders which has caused some confusion. In August 2011, ASI started to transition to the new card and since then the LACCOD has identified several concerns

1. The potential for identity theft by family members or caregivers.
2. The risk of being targeted by the criminal element due to the VISA Logo and the possibility of receiving injuries during an attempted robbery or snatching event.
3. The small print on the back of the card is especially difficult for the partially sighted/low vision person to read.
4. Confusion caused with the option to activate or not activate the VISA component of card.
5. The difficulty with understanding regular monthly fees/charges.
6. The TAP Card system possibly being adopted by the Los Angeles County Metro transportation system as well, which would result in the same concerns.

Community Advisory Committee

ASI is currently in the process of restructuring their Community Advisory Committee (CAC). Access established the CAC in 1995 as an advisory body intended to represent the voice of the disability community. LACCOD would like to understand why the restructuring was necessary, and to ensure that the disabled community is represented equally, on both the Board of Directors and the Community Advisory Committee and is able to voice concerns and opinions without fear of retaliation.

Vehicles Purchases

LACCOD is particularly concerned about the size of vehicles being purchased by ASI. Several Commissioners have witnessed a Toyota Prius being used to transport disabled riders. LACCOD fully supports green initiatives and understands the importance of purchasing "green" vehicles. However, the use of smaller "green" vehicles should not interfere with a riders comfort and safety and have adequate trunk compartment space for walkers, canes, crutches, wheelchairs and other equipment.

Honorable Board of Supervisors

January 18, 2012

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In closing, the Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities would like to thank you for taking the time to consider the concerns of the LACCOD. As our next meeting of the Commission will be held on February 15, 2012, we would hope that your office can provide us with any information on the issues raised above prior to that date. Thank you again for your attention to this matter.

JBT:rr

c: Avianna Uribe
Kathleen Austria
Cynthia Scott
Richard Espinosa
Helen Berberian
Dolores Nasen, Board of Supervisors, ASI Board Member Appointee

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